

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

### Partnerships and Accountability

#### Service Participates in Actions Toward a Sustainable Great Lakes Conference



Project Leader McClain attended the May 5-6 "Actions Toward a Sustainable Great Lakes" Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The conference, hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Great Lakes Commission, brings federal, state and tribal natural resource agencies, as well as representatives of municipalities and industry together to share concerns and ideas on actions necessary to protect biological, social and economic interests in this complex ecosystem.

Breakout sessions focused on eight topics; Water Use and Management, Water Quality, Toxic Hotspots, Aquatic Invasive Species, Human Health, Habitat and Wetlands, Sustainable Waterways and Research and Decision Support. During each breakout session participants discussed the most pressing issues and ways to better communicate and collaborate to address these issues for the benefit of the ecosystem. During late March and early April, McClain had served on the planning committee for the Habitat and Wetlands Session - jointly sponsored by Ducks Unlimited and the Service. Service offices participating in the planning exercise included the East Lansing, New York and Reynoldsburg Field Offices, and the Lower Great Lakes and Alpena Fishery Resource Offices. Service staff, including Regional Director Robyn Thorson, participated as speakers, session moderators and resource specialists during various segments of the conference. McClain served on a panel of resource specialists for the Wetlands and Habitat breakout session on May 6. Improved coordination and communication between numerous Great Lakes partners is essential to restoring and protecting the ecosystem and the biological, social and economic interests around the basin. Conferences such as the one discussed are important first steps in addressing existing concerns and meeting future challenges faced in the Great Lakes ecosystem.

*Jerry R. McClain*

### Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

#### Thunder Bay River Working Committee Meeting



Assistant Project Leader Tracy Hill participated in a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Working Committee meeting for Thunder Bay Power (Working Committee). The Working Committee was created to assist Thunder Bay Power with its requirements to FERC under the terms of their license. Dr. Hill is the Service representative on the Working Committee. During the May meeting Dennis

McCauley of Great Lakes Environmental Center gave a presentation regarding strategies for diversion and protection of downstream fish passage. Mr. McCauley presented the current techniques available for downstream passage and gave advantages and disadvantages of each technique. At the request of the committee he will develop a proposal recommending a technique to be considered for the effectiveness study that is required as part of Article 419 (Fish Passage). Control of Eurasian watermilfoil at Fletcher's Floodwaters was also discussed. Thunder Bay Audubon Society working in conjunction with Huron Pines RC and D would like to conduct a survey on Fletcher's Floodwaters to determine the extent of the watermilfoil infestation and the possibilities for control. A proposal will be developed by Huron Pines RC and D for further consideration by the Working Committee to fund this survey. A check was present to the city of Alpena to begin construction on the Lamarre Park fishing pier (Article 418). The pier should be completed in June 2004. The meeting was attended by member representatives from Michigan DNR, Thunder Bay Power and FWS. In addition representatives from Hubbard Lake Sportsmen and Development Association, Northeast Michigan Counsel of Governments, Huron Pines RC & D, Montmorency County Conservation District, Thunder Bay River Restoration Committee, Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition and Thunder Bay Audubon also participated. Service involvement in this initiative provides an opportunity to minimize the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species from the hydropower facilities.

*Tracy D. Hill*

#### **Michigan Wetlands: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Wetlands Protection Act**



In 1979, the Michigan Legislature passed the Goemaere-Anderson Wetland Protection Act. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of this legislation the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Agency and other partners including the Service sponsored a statewide wetlands conference. The conference was held in Traverse City, MI at the Northwest Michigan College Water Studies Institute May 20-22. Alpena FRO Biologist Enterline attended the conference, along with many natural resource agency professionals, conservation organizations, educators, and consultants. Several Service employees gave presentations and led concurrent sessions including Jim Hudgins, Jim Hazelman (ELPLO) and Barbara Hosler (ELFO). Presentations varied widely in subject matter from the politics surrounding wetland issues, to wetland management, to flora and fauna inhabiting the wetlands, and the current status of biological populations. The conference was not only educational for the attendees, it also provided many outreach opportunities for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners). Presentations were given on the program, and a display was present throughout the conference with Partners information available in the form of fliers and fact sheets. Contacts were made with many State of Michigan agency personnel, reporters, and educators.

*Heather L. Enterline*

## **Aquatic Species Conservation and Management**

### **Spring Surveillance for Invasive Ruffe Conducted in Lake Huron**

Alpena FRO conducted surveillance efforts to detect the spread of spawning phase adult Eurasian ruffe (ruffe) in Thunder Bay, Lake Huron. Thunder Bay contains the only known population of ruffe in Lake Huron. Nighttime electrofishing surveys were conducted in nearshore areas north and south of the Thunder Bay River, a known ruffe spawning location. The surveys were conducted on May 11 and 20. No ruffe were discovered as a result of the effort. Efforts to address the threats to aquatic species and provide effective conservation and management are important components of the Fisheries Strategic Vision.

*Anjanette K. Bowen*

## **Public Use**

### **Sturgeon Trivia and Salmon Migration Make Big Splash at Scout Fest 04**



Assistant Project Leader Tracy D. Hill and Fishery Biologist Susan Wells participated in Scout Fest 04. Approximately 350 Boy and Girl Scouts from across northern Michigan traveled to Alpena on May 8-9 to participate in the event. Many activities were provided for the kids by community organizations. The Fish and Wildlife Service booth focused on activities of the Alpena FRO. Kids were given an opportunity to identify fish parts by constructing fish puzzles, identify family characteristics by fish species and learn

salmon and sturgeon biology by playing "Salmon Migration" and "Sturgeon Trivia". The scouts also had an opportunity to view and learn about aquatic nuisance species.

Partnerships with community organizations, particularly for educational purposes which enhance public use, are an important part of the Service's Strategic Fisheries Vision.

*Tracy D. Hill*

### **Alpena FRO Represented at Alpena Public Schools Science Safari**

During the week of May 24<sup>th</sup>, staff from Alpena FRO represented the Service at the Science Exploration Safari held at the Alpena Community College and Jesse Besser Museum. The Science Exploration Safari was sponsored by the Alpena Public Schools and was intended for all 4th and 5th grade students in Alpena County. The college hosted the event and which featured numerous exhibits and presentations all dealing with science. The purpose of the Safari was to provide a curriculum driven, research based, hands-on science museum for the students. Biologists Scott Koproski, Susan Wells, Heather Enterline, Anjanette Bowen, and Tracy Hill all participated in the exhibit. During that week over 1000 students and teachers were exposed to Alpena FRO's booth. Games, fish mounts, and brochures were made available to all who stopped by to see the exhibit. Alpena FRO staff provided information on Aquatic Nuisance Species, native species and fielded a variety of questions dealing with the Great Lakes Ecosystem. Providing students a brief exposure to the work of the science professions may entice a few to choose a similar career path as adults.

*Scott R. Koproski*

### **Outdoor Education Classroom**

On May 12, Biologists Wells and Bowen participated in an Outdoor Education Classroom at Sportsmen's Island in Alpena, Michigan. The event showcased natural resources to area elementary students. Topics for this event included Great Lakes Fisheries, Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS), Forestry, and animal habitats. Every student spent 30 minutes learning about each topic. Biologists Wells and Bowen presented information on ANS to over 250 3rd and 4th graders from Ella White Elementary. The presentation included a live specimen of an adult sea lamprey and ammocetes along with plasto-mounts of round goby, Eurasian ruffe, and zebra mussels. These props allowed the students to become more involved with the presentation and increased their awareness of how they came to the Great Lakes and how these species harm the environment. This accomplishment was an educational and outreach opportunity. We were able to showcase the USFWS and the Alpena FRO and educate young students on Aquatic Nuisance Species and how they can help stop the spread of them in the Great Lakes. Approximately 250 students and 40 adults attended the event.

*Susan E. Wells*

## **Workforce Management**

### **Preparing for a Safe Boating Season**



On May 3, 2004, Fishery Biologists Adam Kowalski, Aaron Woldt, and Scott Koproski spent the afternoon providing the Alpena FRO staff with a refresher on boat safety and maintenance. Every boat owned and operated by the Alpena FRO was brought to the office parking lot and issues specific to each was highlighted. Woldt, Kowalski, and Koproski carefully went through every boat explaining hook-up and trailering, what is on the vessel for safety gear and where it is located, launching procedure, explanation of the

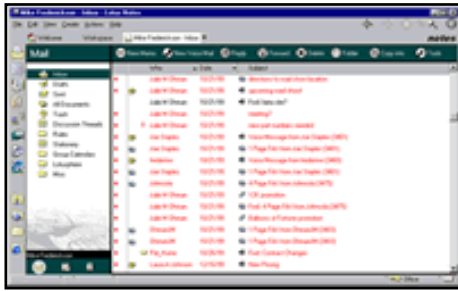
braking system on the trailer when applicable, special attention that a particular vessel may need while operating it, and general maintenance before and after operating a vessel.

This was the first time that the Alpena FRO has conducted a pre-field season boat orientation meeting and it was welcomed and seemed to be very helpful for those individuals that have not operated the station vessels since last field season. This will now be an annual session for the Alpena FRO staff. Boat safety and maintenance training was developed to provide employees with opportunities to maintain competencies in proper boating procedures and to help ensure that all employees are properly trained to safely and effectively perform their boating duties. Safety training is an important component of Workforce Management in the Fisheries Strategic Vision.

*Adam T. Kowalski*



### Alpena FRO Lotus Notes Upgrade



During May, Administrative Technician Turner upgraded the Alpena FRO computers to Lotus Notes 6.5. This upgrade offers several new features such as; a new Welcome Page with a 'workplace' that has multiple panes to display such items as your Mail, Calendar, To Do List, etc. The ability to manage junk mail, mark mail messages for follow-up action, and a time column added to mail views. Deletions are immediate, no longer requiring a refresh. Printing has

the capability to print the entire list of names in the To or CC fields or just the ones shown. With the installation of the new 'Notes', personnel will be better able to complete day to day tasks in a more efficient and organized manner. This upgrade makes for a more consistent and trouble-free mail system. This upgrade is consistent with the Service's Fisheries Vision for Workforce Management.

*Debra L. Tuner*

### Annual Spring Safety Training Completed at Alpena FRO



Staff at the Alpena FRO received annual safety training for CPR and Fire Extinguisher use in April and May. Robert Petersen of the Jordan River NFH (Elmira, MI) provided CPR training for the Alpena staff on April 6. Fire extinguisher training was provided by Great Lakes Fire and Safety Equipment on May 17. Safety training protects Service employees and the public they work with in the event of an emergency. It is an important component of Workforce Management in the Fisheries Strategic Vision.

*Anjanette K. Bowen*